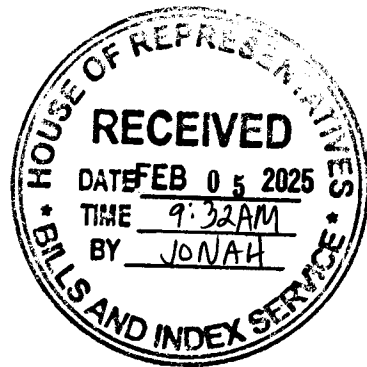


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11432



Introduced by
ACT TEACHERS Party-list Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO

AN ACT
ADDRESSING THE SHORTAGE OF PRINCIPALS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND FOR
THIS PURPOSE MANDATING A "ONE SCHOOL, ONE PRINCIPAL" POLICY,
PROVIDING FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution of the Philippines, under Article XIV, Section 1, mandates that the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Furthermore, Section 5(5) of the same article emphasizes the State's duty to assign the highest budgetary priority to education to ensure that the right to education is fully realized. These constitutional provisions underscore the necessity of addressing systemic issues in the education sector, including the lack of qualified school principals, to uphold the right to quality education for all Filipino learners.

The Year Two Report of the EDCOM 2 reveals a critical gap in the Philippine education system: only 20,381 out of 45,199 public schools have school principals; out of the 20,381, only 18,744 had the corresponding plantilla item. More than half of all public schools—24,916 or 55%—lack a principal, with 13,332 managed by Head Teachers, 8,916 by “teachers-in-charge,” and 2,337 by “officers-in-charge.” The remaining cases are marked as “undefined.” This alarming situation forces these teachers to assume the responsibilities of principals without adequate training, resources, or compensation. This systemic neglect not only undermines the quality of education but also exacerbates the already heavy burden on educators, who are already grappling with low salaries, excessive workloads, and insufficient support from the government.

The lack of principals can be attributed to the government's policies on filling the principal plantilla items. According to the EDCOM report, the National Qualifying Examination for School

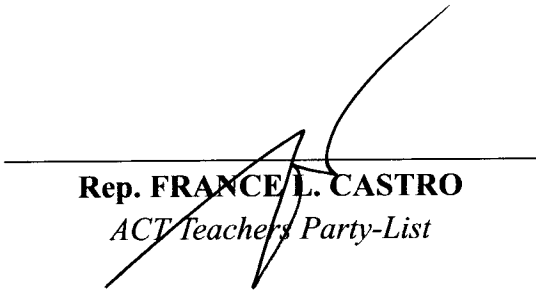
Heads (NQESH) have low passing rates and “inconsistent delivery.” The report also shows that there’s no “formalized succession plan for school leadership,” or a system that will prepare, train, and support potential principals.

Another reason for the principal shortage is the policy and practice of “clustering” of DepEd, which essentially implies that if the school is small, it does not need a dedicated principal. This clustering policy is an austerity measure, which prioritizes cost-cutting over the welfare of educators and the quality of education. The insufficient salary, lack of training, and overwhelming responsibilities deter qualified individuals from pursuing leadership roles in schools. This systemic failure reflects the broader crisis in the education sector, where the government’s neglect and underfunding have led to deteriorating conditions for both educators and learners.

The implications of school principals are serious. Without proper leadership in schools, who will be the partners of our teachers in their teaching? Who will ensure the proper management of resources in our schools? Who will maintain academic standards and oversee the development of students? Who will liaise with local communities and stakeholders?

The “One School, One Principal” policy seeks to address this critical issue by mandating the appointment of a qualified principal for every school in the country. The bill aims to reform the standards for principal qualifications, ensuring that principal plantilla items are filled and school leaders are adequately trained and equipped to manage their institutions effectively. By mandating sufficient number of school principals, the bill seeks to improve the quality of education and create a more conducive learning environment for students.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought to address the systemic issues in the education sector, uphold the right to quality education, and ensure the welfare of educators and learners alike.



Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Party-List

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THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “**One School, One Principal Act.**”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure quality education by providing adequate and competent leadership in all public schools. The State recognizes the critical role of school principals or school heads in achieving effective school management, improving learning outcomes, and fostering a conducive environment for both teachers and learners.

To this end, the State shall ensure that every public school is led by a qualified principal, supported by sufficient resources and professional development opportunities, to guarantee the delivery of quality education to all Filipino learners.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

- (a) “Public school” refers to an educational institution established and funded by the government, offering basic education programs under the supervision of the Department of Education (DepEd).
- (b) “Principal” refers to an individual responsible for the overall management, supervision, and leadership of a public school under the Department of Education (DepEd); *Provided, That*, for purposes of this Act, this term shall include those occupying a plantilla position of School Principal (I–IV), Assistant School Principal (I–III), and Special Schools Principal.
- (c) “Clustering” refers to the current practice of assigning one principal to oversee multiple schools, either temporarily or permanently.
- (d) “National Educators Academy of the Philippines” (NEAP) refers to the agency under DepEd mandated to provide professional development programs for teachers and school leaders.

SEC. 4. *One School, One Principal Policy.* – Every public school shall have one (1) principal and one (1) assistant principal assigned exclusively to manage and lead the school. Clustering and similar policies and practices by which one principal is assigned to multiple schools are hereby prohibited.

SEC. 5. *Filling Up of Principal Positions.* – The DepEd shall ensure that all existing principal positions in public schools are filled within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act. The DepEd shall prioritize the hiring and deployment of qualified principals to schools currently without a principal.

To this end, the DepEd shall also take the necessary steps, also within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, to ensure that all persons it has designated as “school head,” “teacher-in-charge,” “officer-in-charge,” or any other designation to fulfill the responsibilities of a principal are promoted to the appropriate school principal plantilla position. In no case shall any diminution of salaries and benefits occur.

SECTION 6. *Creation of Principal Items.* – The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall create and allocate a sufficient number of principal and assistant principal items to meet the requirements of the “One School, One Principal” policy. The DBM shall ensure that the necessary funds are included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Professional Development Support.* – The DepEd, in coordination with the NEAP, shall provide continuous professional development programs for principals. These programs shall include capacity-building, leadership training, and other forms of support to enhance their skills and competencies in school management and instructional leadership.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DepEd and DBM. Thereafter, such sums as may

be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd, in coordination with the DBM, NEAP and the CSC, and in consultation with the Philippine Elementary School Principals Association (PESPA), the National Association of Public Secondary School Heads, Inc. (NAPSSHI), the National Association of Public Secondary Schools of the Philippines (NAPSSPHIL), and other organizations of principals, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,